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Colorful foliage can be just as dramatic and lush as flowers.

# Add Charm with Window Boxes

These classic containers soften a facade and provide instant character

**B**eautiful gardens in miniature—that's the essential appeal of window boxes. No matter if you lack the time, money, or energy to maintain large, sumptuous borders, you can still enjoy colorful flowers and foliage in planters that are small enough to change in five minutes and striking enough to give your house a new look.

So asserts Charleston, South Carolina, horticulturist Tracee Lund of Potted Pleasures, who specializes in

designing and caring for eye-catching window boxes and other containers. "I like to plant instant gratification," she says. Tracee thinks people are drawn to window boxes because "they're small enough in scale for novice gardeners to tackle and offer a chance to personalize your home."

We asked her to plant window boxes for the three homes pictured here and on the following pages to show the many looks you can get and how to adapt the design to fit particular conditions. ⇨





#### ◀ LOOK COOL FOR SUMMER

This window box dresses up the front of the home (shown on page 66) while providing extra gardening space. Tracee used light colors to evoke a cooler feel in summer. The white, chartreuse, and green also pick up the colors of the house and small front garden.

**WHAT'S PLANTED** 'Aaron' white caladium, 'Key Lime Pie' heuchera, 'White Nancy' spotted dead nettle, holly fern, ivy, and light pink periwinkle



#### ▲ FOLLOW THE MAGIC FORMULA

This lush planter reflects the proven "thriller, filler, spiller" recipe that puts a tall plant in the center, mounding plants on the sides, and trailing plants flowing over the edges.

**WHAT'S PLANTED** Japanese iris is the thriller. White snapdragon, violet African daisy, red common geranium, and white 'Tidal Wave Silver' petunia are fillers. Pink and red ivy geraniums, dark red calibrachoa, and purple Lanai series verbena are spillers. ⇨

**GET THE LOOK** For an upscale window box (like the one above), have one custom made from rot-resistant wood, such as cedar. It will need painting and a metal liner inside to make it last. Check out less expensive alternatives at [gardeners.com](http://gardeners.com), [kinsmangarden.com](http://kinsmangarden.com), [plowearth.com](http://plowearth.com), and [hooksandlattice.com](http://hooksandlattice.com), and see the Smith & Hawken collection at [target.com](http://target.com).





▲ GO FOR THE BOLD

The big challenge in choosing plants for this hayrack was picking colors to complement the vivid coral of the stucco wall.

**WHAT'S PLANTED** Coral twinspur (diascia), blue Panola pansy, blue delphinium, blue edging lobelia, white common geranium, coral trailing petunia, and white 'Diamond Frost' euphorbia. The twinspur and petunia echo the wall, the geranium and euphorbia echo the window frame, and blue simply looks great with coral.



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## TAKE IT FROM TRACEE

Some tricks of the trade to ensure success with window boxes

**1.**

### Echo the color of the house.

For a more cohesive look, every window box should contain plants that have foliage or flowers that complement the house or surrounding garden. It's the same principle you use when matching flowers to a pot, framing a painting, or even choosing a shirt and tie.

**2.**

### Choose the best plants.

Try mixing plants that cascade from the sides with mounding ones that give heft to the center. Don't plant something that grows too tall and hides the window—unless privacy is your objective. Combine plants that require similar light, moisture, and temperatures. "Don't fight nature," warns Tracee.


**3.**

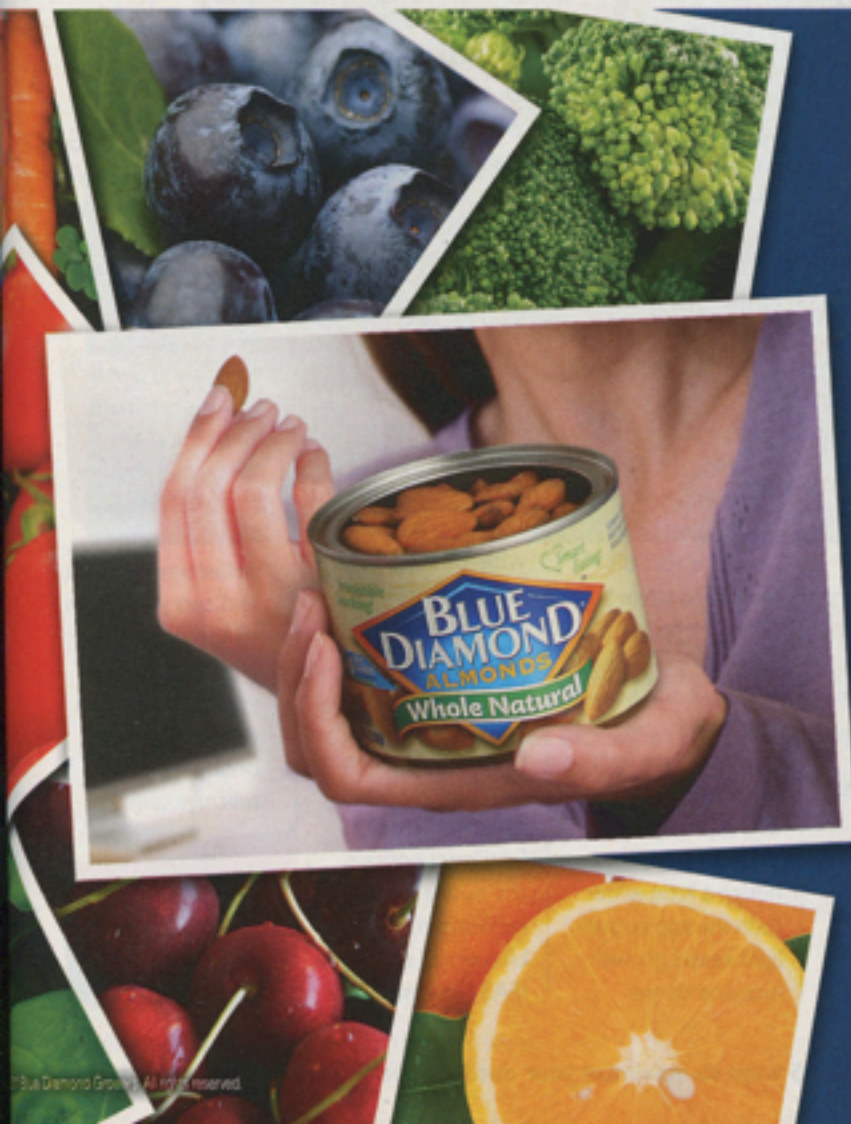
### Pick the right window box.

A hayrack (planted out at left) consists of a metal frame with a coco-fiber liner. It's easy to put up and take down and can cost less than \$50. However, you have to replace the liner and soil annually. For about the same money, you can buy a traditional-looking window box made of a composite material that won't rot or warp.

**4.**

### Give them consistent care.

Window boxes, like most container gardens, need regular attention. Start with quality potting soil that contains lots of organic matter, stays moist, and drains well. Remove spent flowers promptly to encourage more flowers. Fertilize twice a month using a liquid blossom-boosting product. 



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